

17 Day Kiwi Encounter

DAY 1 Auckland to Coromandel

We kick things off in the beautiful city of Auckland, before we set off for the Coromandel – this is the place locals go for a holiday! A combination of gorgeous beaches meets shrouded rainforest, it's a great place to slow down and relax.

DAY 2 Coromandel to Rotorua

We start the day with brunch fit for a king (or queen). Then you'll have time to explore the region: Long Bay Beach is often popular, with plenty of room for catching the sun's rays or cooling off with a swim during the warmer months. If possible we'll visit Hot Water Beach, where the bubbling waters naturally warm the sands. Then we'll make our way to Rotorua – check out the thermally heated pool after dinner! (B)

DAY 3 Rotorua to Marae Stay

You have the full day to explore Rotorua, with plenty of options available – perhaps travel to Waitomo, or maybe visit Hobbiton to see part of the original *Lord of the Rings* movie set? Of course you can always visit the local mud baths or get a massage right here in town. Then tonight is one of the highlights of a Topdeck trip through NZ – a chance to stay in a traditional Maori Marae, learning a little of their culture as honoured guests. (B, D)

DAY 4 Rotorua to Tongariro National Park

After breakfast we head to Whakarewarewa Village and Thermal Reserve, to learn more about Maori culture and to experience a moving traditional concert. Travelling past the roaring Huka Falls, we'll reach Lake Taupo for an optional bungee jump, before reaching Tongariro National Park, our home for the next two nights. (B, D)

DAY 5 Tongariro National Park

Use this free day to explore the National Park – there's loads of activities to keep you busy. And all in one of the most beautiful landscapes you've ever seen! (B)

DAY 6 Tongariro National Park to Wellington

We leave the natural world today, and head back to civilisation in the form of Wellington. New Zealand's capital, we'll get a bird's eye view of the city from Mt Victoria, before giving you a chance to discover it all at your own pace. Maybe catch the cable car up to the botanic gardens, or visit Te Papa, Wellington's National Museum. (B)

DAY 7 Wellington to Hanmer Springs

Jump on the ferry across Cook Strait to the South Island, and embrace the natural beauty of Marlborough Sound as we cruise into the modest town of Picton. Expect immense mountain ranges, glacial lakes and magnificent scenery for the next few days. (B)

DAY 8 Hanmer Springs to Christchurch

Get a feel for the South Island, as we explore Hanmer Springs! There's a variety of optional activities from relaxing in the thermal pools to jet-boating down the Waiau Gorge. Later we'll make tracks for Christchurch, arriving with enough time for a voluntary dinner in town. (B)

DAY 9 Christchurch to Lake Ohau

Today we travel across the Canterbury plains to discover what it's like to run a sheep farm (at the Kiwi Farm Experience). We stop for lunch at Lake Takapo, with an optional 40 minute flight available (well worth it if you can afford). We continue onto Lake Pukaki for

some fabulous photos of Mt Cook, before finishing up on the shores of Lake Ohau. (B, Morning Tea, D)

DAY 10 Lake Ohau to Fiordland Experience

Start with a drive through Cromwell district and near the Kawarau river – typical *Lord of the Rings* territory. Stopping in Te Anau, we'll take time to admire the glacial Mirror Lake, before pressing on. Tonight we'll experience the fiords up close, with an overnight cruise. We may spot seals and dolphins if we're lucky! (B, D)

DAY 11 Fiordland to Queenstown

We'll continue the cruise this morning, before returning to wharf and setting off for the adrenalin capital of the Southern Hemisphere, Queenstown! Combine spectacular scenery with heart-racing adventures and you're still nowhere near it. Take some free time this afternoon to explore, before we reconvene for dinner and a chance to check out the nightlife! (B, D)

DAY 12 Queenstown

With the day ahead of you, prepare to up the excitement levels! Options include the traditional bungee jump, zooming around canyons with the Shotover Jet, or more leisurely pursuits such as horse or mountain bike riding. Then again, perhaps you'd like to admire all from above whilst aboard the skyline gondola? The choice is yours. (B)

DAY 13 Queenstown to Fox Glacier

Your last chance for adventure awaits this morning, before we head out past Lakes Hawea and Wanaka to Makarora. Take in the gorgeous scenery of glaciers and lofty mountain ranges along the way – late this afternoon we'll get the chance to walk around Lake Matheson if the weather's clear, before arriving at our overnight destination. (B, D)

DAY 14 Fox Glacier to Greymouth

To really discover the beauty of the glacier up and surrounding area up close, take on the optional half-day guided hike. Of course, you might prefer the optional heli-hike, which offers views from up on high. We travel to the rugged natural beauty of the West Coast, visiting Hokitika and the local jade factory – maybe pick up a little souvenir? Finally tonight, we'll go on a guided tour of Monteith's Brewery, with a free sample included! (B, D)

DAY 15 Greymouth to Nelson

This morning explore the spectacular Punakaiki National Park, best known for its "pancake" stacks of rocks and majestic blowholes. It's a short hop to Lakes Rotoroa and Rotoiti, where we'll stop for a chance to explore, before reaching the Nelson Lakes National Park, a truly stunning collection of southern alps. Our final destination tonight is Nelson, a bustling town with a vibrant arts community. (B)

DAY 16 Nelson

You're free to explore the local area today, with a multitude of options on the table. Hike through the nearby Abel Tasman National Park, where the bush meets pristine beaches. Explore the park by boat or kayak, take to horseback or quad bike for a more grounded option, even tandem skydive for the ultimate view of the Park. We'll catch up over dinner. (B, D)

DAY 17 Nelson to Christchurch via Kaikoura

We travel across the mountain ranges and reach Ohau Point, where we'll stop to check out some local fur seals from afar. Then it's on to Kaikoura for lunch (own expense) and the

chance to go on an optional whale watching or dolphin swimming escapade! Later we head down to Christchurch, and the end of our journey together. (B)